



# **SARS**

## **SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME**

Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory illness that has been reported in Asia, North America and Europe.

### **Symptoms**

In general, SARS begins with a fever greater than 100.4 degrees F [38 degrees C]. Other symptoms may include headache, an overall feeling of discomfort and body aches. Some people also experience mild respiratory symptoms. After two to seven days, SARS patients may develop a dry cough and have trouble breathing.

### **How SARS Spreads**

The primary way that SARS appears to spread is by close person-to-person contact. Most cases of SARS have involved people who cared for or lived with someone with SARS, or had direct contact with infectious material (for example, respiratory secretions) from a person who has SARS. Potential ways in which SARS can be spread include touching the skin of other people or objects that are contaminated with infectious droplets and then touching your eye(s), nose or mouth. This can happen when someone who is sick with SARS coughs or sneezes droplets onto themselves, other people or nearby surfaces. It also is possible that SARS can be spread more broadly through the air or by other ways that are currently not known.

### **Who Is at Risk for SARS**

Most of the cases of SARS in the United States have occurred among travelers returning from other parts of the world where SARS is found. There have been very few cases as a result of spread to close contacts such as family members and health care workers.

### **Possible Cause of SARS**

A previously unrecognized coronavirus has been identified as the cause of SARS.

**For more information, visit the following websites or call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378.**

North Dakota Department of Health SARS website – [www.health.state.nd.us/disease/SARS/](http://www.health.state.nd.us/disease/SARS/)  
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/)  
World Health Organization – [www.who.int/csr/sars/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/) .